

# Clarke County

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**PLANNING COMMISSION  
BUSINESS INTERSECTION AREA PLANS SUBCOMMITTEE  
Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, April 28, 2016**

A meeting of the Planning Commission Site Plan Committee was held at the Berryville/Clarke County Government Center, Berryville, Virginia, on Thursday, April 28, 2016.

**ATTENDANCE**

Robina Bouffault, Anne Caldwell, and Gwendolyn Malone

**Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** Ryan Fincham (Senior Planner/Zoning Administrator); Brandon Stidham (Planning Director); Len Capelli (Director of Economic Development and Tourism)

**CALLED TO ORDER**

Staff called the meeting to order at 2:00PM.

Mr. Stidham began the Subcommittee Kickoff Meeting by providing an overview of the process to update the Waterloo and Double Tollgate Area Plans. He indicated that the work to be completed today will provide direction to Staff to assemble plan update outlines for review at the Subcommittee's next meeting. He reviewed the draft work plan and indicated that the schedule is aggressive with the goal of presenting revised plans to the full Planning Commission in September.

Mr. Stidham also reviewed Staff's list of Items for Consideration in updating both plans and indicated that it is important to discuss how we want to use these plans in the future. He noted that the Comprehensive Plan does not recommend the expansion of the areas until build-out is reached. He also reminded the members that Double Tollgate is now recommended as a deferred growth area in the Comprehensive Plan and that we need to add language to the Double Tollgate Area Plan to reflect this designation. Ms. Bouffault asked whether Double Tollgate was already designated as a deferred growth area and Mr. Stidham said that it is in the Comprehensive Plan but it needs to be reflected as such in the revised Area Plan. He added that we need to establish development triggers that need to occur in order for the County to consider investing in public infrastructure to support the growth area.

Mr. Stidham noted that the Subcommittee should consider recommendations on addressing development proposals adjacent to these Areas including whether or not to consider these proposals and, if so, whether to establish new regulations to address them or establish "transition" policies. Ms. Bouffault asked whether funding should be set aside annually for economic development projects. Mr. Stidham said that this is similar to the Waterloo fee subsidy program and asked Ms. Bouffault if

she had a specific use for these funds in mind. She replied that investment in broadband internet access to support business could be one use. Specifically, she suggested installation of cable in Waterloo to provide wired broadband. She noted in speaking recently with Mike Legge that there has been no interest in the Waterloo fee subsidy program since it was created. She also expressed concerns with availability fees and that we may need to look at how the fees are calculated similar to how it is done by neighboring jurisdictions using a meter size approach instead of gallons per day of usage.

Mr. Stidham asked Mr. Capelli about the concerns he has heard from landowners in Waterloo and Double Tollgate. He replied that the only concerns he noted are from owners of adjacent AOC-zoned properties wanting to rezone to commercial. Mr. Stidham asked whether they expressed concern about the availability fees and he replied no. Ms. Bouffault said that we could require landowners to commit to paying the availability fees if they want to rezone to commercial adjacent to the growth area. She added that of the two plans, the Waterloo Area has the most potential for development. Mr. Capelli said that Waterloo has the most immediate potential but that Double Tollgate may have the better long-term potential due to the traffic numbers. Ms. Bouffault indicated that there is a lot of competition on the US 522 corridor and both Warren and Frederick Counties have invested heavily in infrastructure there. Mr. Capelli said that the Department of Corrections property could be a source of land for future development. Ms. Bouffault noted that the General Assembly in the most recent session preempted designating the property for sale as surplus. Mr. Stidham said this might be a key issue for the Double Tollgate Plan update to provide direction as to what to do with the property if it comes available. Ms. Bouffault recommended contacting Senator Vogel for more information on the State's plans for the property.

Ms. Bouffault restated the concept of setting aside money annually to support economic development efforts. Mr. Stidham suggested whether this could be in the form of a grant program to help businesses locate in the County. Ms. Bouffault said that investment in communications infrastructure should be the top priority. Mr. Stidham said that wired broadband may already be at Waterloo as McDonald's offers free Wi-Fi. Ms. Bouffault noted that L'Auberge Provencale pursued wired broadband access for its guests but that it was cost-prohibitive. Mr. Stidham asked whether Ms. Bouffault envisioned using Waterloo as a broadband access hub for nearby properties. She replied that this might be something for the telecommunications engineering consultant to evaluate. She also asked about recent fiber optic installations that have occurred in the County and whether they could be accessed. Mr. Capelli said that these projects were for the Department of Homeland Security and they are not available for public use. Ms. Bouffault said that we can lay fiber optic cable to increase access and the only question is cost. She reiterated that it is important to begin setting aside funding annually to take advantage of future opportunities.

Ms. Caldwell indicated that the Federal government seems to be very interested in getting broadband access to rural areas, and they typically offer cost-sharing grant programs to implement their efforts. She suggested that an economic development fund could be used as a source of matching funds for these Federal programs. Mr. Stidham said that he hopes the telecommunications engineering study would give us a better idea of how we can invest our local funds in broadband infrastructure.

Mr. Stidham said that neither of the two plans have a clear goals statement and that one should be developed through this process. He suggested making broadband access one of the goals and

exploring ways to reduce the cost of water and sewer as a second goal. Ms. Caldwell said that reducing the fee structure could be a strategy to support that goal. Mr. Stidham asked whether there are other ways to reduce utility fees without adding customers or subsidizing. He added that if the answer is no, does this mean that you need to add more commercial area. Mr. Capelli said that we do not have enough information to know if adding land to the growth areas will increase demand for development.

Mr. Stidham said that Waterloo may have a capacity issue in regards to available land for development, and the members discussed the known status of the undeveloped or partially developed parcels in the growth area. Ms. Bouffault asked whether the area could be expanded, such as north towards Boyce. Mr. Stidham suggested looking at limited adjacent parcels to increase commercial development potential and encouraging landowners to rezone to commercial with specific uses or developments proposed. Ms. Bouffault said it would be helpful to have maps of the growth areas and adjacent properties with property owner information included. Mr. Stidham said that he can have those maps assembled for the next meeting. Ms. Caldwell said that it might be important to look at connectivity with the commercial areas on US 340 just north of Waterloo including the Neato Outlet and the former cabinet shop building.

Mr. Stidham said if we want to add new areas to the plans, we should consider either creating a transition category and associated guidelines or potentially adding them into the growth areas. He also noted that these areas could be represented in a general fashion similar to how the "Potential Future Growth Areas" in the revised Berryville Area Plan are represented. He recommended adding this to the agenda for the next meeting as a mapping exercise and discussion. Mr. Capelli concurred with this as a proactive approach. Mr. Stidham asked if the use type should continue to be limited to Highway Commercial or whether any light industrial uses should be considered for Waterloo. Ms. Bouffault said that light industrial is probably not an appropriate category for that area.

Mr. Stidham asked if there were any other suggestions for new plan goals. Ms. Caldwell suggested considering tax abatement programs or other types of incentives to attract businesses. Ms. Bouffault said she understands how tax abatement programs can work for rehabilitation of older buildings but did not know how it would work for new businesses. Mr. Capelli said those programs only work with State participation. Ms. Caldwell replied that this would be a worthwhile topic to explore.

Mr. Stidham said that if transition areas are created, a specific list of preferred uses such as agricultural support businesses could be used to identify which types of rezoning requests would be supported. He also stated that updated traffic counts are needed for the plan update and he wondered whether traffic counts on US 50 are declining. Ms. Bouffault said she cannot see large businesses locating at the business intersections but that support businesses such as Winchester Equipment would be appropriate. She added that niche businesses should also be brought in to provide vitality to the rural aspects that we are trying to protect. Ms. Bouffault noted that the economy is not as strong as in other times and this will be a challenge. Ms. Malone asked how Frederick County does economic development. Mr. Capelli replied that they are facing the same challenges and that you hear about new businesses opening there but do not hear about the businesses that are closing. Ms. Bouffault said that there are some new businesses such as the FBI records facility and wondered how these would affect Clarke County. Mr. Capelli added that broadband internet access will be important for these business and their employees.

Mr. Stidham said that a number of consultant studies were done to assemble the Waterloo and Double Tollgate Area Plans and that most are out of date and not useful. He asked the Subcommittee whether any new studies would need to be commissioned and the members said that none are needed. Ms. Bouffault said that the plans need to be direct and clearly state what we want to accomplish.

Mr. Stidham asked if the members were comfortable with Staff developing the framework for both plans and bringing them to the next meeting for discussion and the members said yes.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:12PM.



Brandon Stidham, Clerk